

BIRLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 18 January 2012
Birlingham Village Hall

Welcome

- 1) Present: Councillors Hall, Morris, Comins, Hill and Butler.
In attendance: District Councillor Davis, Tree Warden and Chris Reynard.
- 2) Apologies: Apologies were accepted from County Councillor Hardman attending a Budget Consultation meeting, Councillor Aston away in Scotland and the Footpath Warden.
- 3) Declarations
 - a) Personal - none
 - b) Prejudicial - none
 - c) Register of Interests – none
- 4) The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2011, a copy of which had been circulated to all Councillors, were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.
- 5) Democratic Opening – see below
- 6) Progress Reports
 - a) Footpath – expenses claim information to be calculated for next meeting.
 - b) District Councillor
 - i) Happy New Year.
 - ii) Community Grants – flyer circulated regarding the New Homes Bonus. Birlingham grant is £460.00 after 6 April and it is ring fenced. The parish would have to apply and value a need.
 - iii) Figures for Council Tax default rate is 1.25%.
 - iv) Wychavon District Council funds are at 39.9m.
 - c) County Councillor
 - i) Update on the position of the roads. Quote, “Ian Bamforth, Head of Highways, and I came out and had a look inside the village boundaries of Birlingham which is where of course, the principle objections to the condition of the road surfaces exist. We discussed at some length the condition of The Avenue and other roads within the 30mph limit in Birlingham with a view to trying to make some improvements in them, and satisfy the Chairman and residents. Further work has been carried out on in the New Year to assess condition. The result of this is that we are now attempting to draw up a small works programme which we will share you at a later date, probably in March for the next financial year to undertake some works within the village. I would remind the Parish Council that we work to a county wide condition index. This does not mean that at its current setting, we have the justification or financial fire power to entirely resurface all the roads in Birlingham to return them to a state that many members of the Parish Council will

remember with fondness when there was very little traffic on the roads. But it does mean that we are likely to do some work around the Avenue and the turn to Redstar Growers and are keen to see if we can pull the road surfaces together and restore them to a condition which would suit all concerned. We would also be most interested in seeing what we can do to resolve the patch work issues that exist on the road running to the pub, as an example.

- ii) Signage. Quote, “I am still not entirely convinced that Keiran Hemstock exactly gets what we are trying to solve in regard to the question of signage. Since I have forwarded on to your Parish Clerk his latest suggestions. It is my understanding that hardly any heavy vehicles ever access from the Eckington Road and the majority of them come from the Pershore direction which is why having missed the left hand turns to Revills they continue down the hill and then enter the lower village because their satellite navigation systems are instructing them that this is the way to go having missed the earlier turn. If the question of positive signage would be of help I would willingly pursue this and get a suitable sign in place but as you can see from Kieran’s map I am afraid I don’t think the answer is to send lorries along Church Walk and I would be grateful if you could advise me via email as to what course of action you would like me to undertake?”
- d) Clerk
- i) **Wychavon Bursary 2011/2012** from Wychavon District Council Chairman. The Bursary was started by Wychavon District Council in 1993, the award recognises those who’ve made a real contribution to the community and the aim of the fund is to help them to continue with that contribution. Nomination of a person or group in the area? Circulated to all Councillors.
 - ii) Email from Defford Clerk regarding the **Jubilee**. Quote “Can you let me know if your PC is giving a souvenir to village children for the Diamond Jubilee? Defford PC has decided to give all the village children a mug, with the majority of those I expect to be given out at school. However, the Council hasn’t yet thrashed out the finer details, such as whether Strensham and Birlingham children will get a Defford mug – if your parish is doing something similar it would be very useful to know so that I can plan approximate numbers.”
A reply has been sent saying that we have a meeting later in the month and that no decisions/arrangements have been made for the event. Councillors copied in on response.
 - iii) **Wychavon Citizens Advice Bureau**. Letter from Ruth Davies, Manager at Wychavon CAB asking for a donation and “pleading” that they should be included in the budget for 2012-2013 for a contribution in April or May 2012. Received in December after precept. Their letter was read out.
 - iv) **Christmas and New Year Re-cycling** email from the Monitoring Assistant at Wychavon District Council attaching a poster for the **Christmas Collection changes** and the **Christmas tree recycling sites**. Copies placed on noticeboard. Also informing that the 2012 recycling guide and calendar would be delivered by the refuse collection crews.
 - v) **Electoral Register Data**. Email received from Wychavon District Council, quotes “Please see the attached 2012 Electoral Register supplied to you under Regulations 107 Representation of the People (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2002. You can provide copies of this to your Parish Councillors ONLY. The information is only to be used for Electoral purposes”.

vi) CALC Issue 43 22 December 2011 - states “**The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Beacons.** You will be pleased to know that the project celebrating The Queen's Diamond Jubilee next year is proceeding well. I believe we will have 1012 Beacon locations confirmed by Christmas. The Beacons will be lit between the hours of 10pm and 10.30pm on Monday 4 June 2012. Her Majesty The Queen will be lighting the National Beacon in central London around 10.30pm. We do hope that your Council will take part by lighting a Beacon on Monday 4 June 2012 and, if it has not already been done, would be grateful if your Beacon Coordinator could complete the Beacon Registration Form online by going to www.diamondjubileebeacons.co.uk.

vii) **Website** meeting. Email from Councillor Morris saying that he is joining Councillors Hall and Hill for a brief meeting to discuss the website.

viii) BVH wished members a Happy New Year. Also sent the unconfirmed Minutes of the November Meeting and the Agenda for our next Meeting to be held on Wednesday 18th January 2012.

ix) Clerk **re-affirmed meeting dates** for Parish Council hall bookings to the bookings secretary and copied in the secretary following a previous confirmation email. All meetings start at 7.30pm for approximately 1 – 1 ½ hours with the exception of the May meeting when there is a Parish Meeting as well at 7pm. Meetings are every third Wednesday in January, March, May, July, September and November. Therefore, the dates for 2012 are 18 January, 21 March, 16 May, 18 July, 19 September and 21 November.

x) **2011 New Homes Bonus allocations.** Email received from Wychavon District Council quotes “We have just published details of the 2011 New Homes Bonus allocations on our website. For new or empty homes occupied between 1 October 2010 and 30 September 2011, the Government is giving us an annual New Homes Bonus payment of £437,941 for six years. For parishes with housing growth, we have allocated 40% of our New Homes Bonus for reinvestment in local communities where the development that generated it has taken place.

We invite parish and town councils to submit proposals for spending the New Homes Bonus allocations for their area on projects or activities that deliver added value to the local community, and where possible, benefit communities close to any development that the Bonus is associated with. I’m attaching a proposal form and some guidance notes to assist you with preparing proposals. Do get in touch with me if you have any questions or want to discuss your ideas before preparing a proposal”.

xi) **HGV Traffic to Red Star.** Copy of email received regarding **signage** from Kieran Hemstock to Adrian Hardman. Quotes, “Following our discussion regarding heavy goods vehicles in Birlingham, I've now had a look into it.

Whilst we could install a sign stating "unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles" at the junction of Shorthill and The Avenue, it seems more sensible to positively sign traffic at this junction. I've attached a sign design for your consideration, I'd suggest this would offer a more successful solution to the problem”.

Clerk responded to Councillor Hardman and copied in all Councillors. Quote “A sign at the junction of Shorthill and The Avenue would be positive. However, our initial request was for a sign saying "unsuitable for heavy goods vehicles" at a point near the war memorial / going towards the lower end. I would consider these junctions to be

two different areas. We need to prevent the HGV's entering the road at the memorial / village green point”.

Further email from Highways to Councillor Hardman. Quotes, “It is the intention of the 2nd sign to make sure vehicles use Church Lane rather than heading off New Barn Lane towards the War Memorial and beyond?

If so, it may be better to positively sign these vehicles along Church Lane and up The Avenue to Shorthill?”

xii) Letter from Wychavon District Council. **Wychavon Youth Bus** dates put on noticeboard. Continuing to work in villages to offer a safe place for young people to get them off the streets and offer a range of positive activities and targeted support. The bus can be hired from £50 - £200 depending on locations.

xiii) **Pershore High School newsletter** circulated.

xiv) **Public Notice** put on board regarding the Temporary 10mph speed limit on the B4080 Eckington Road from the junction with A4104 Defford Road to the junction with Eckington Bridge to facilitate essential carriageway patching works commencing in February.

xv) **Public Notice** – Temporary Closure on New Barn Road and Eckington Road. And speed limits of 10mph on the Eckington Road commencing in February.

xvi) Worcestershire County Council – **Budget Consultation Briefing** taking place on 18 January to discuss its proposed budget plans and the possible impact this may have locally. Circulated to all Councillors.

xvii) **Precept** returned requested £4,500 (reserves right down). NOTE: Nov 2010 = Precept was accepted at £3,550.00 which is an increase of 18% on last year but had not increased for previous few years. However, it was agreed that this should be increased at a minimum of at least 10% annually in future to cover the budget and more e.g. to cover village hall contribution. Need to rebuild a year's expenditure. Budgeted figures for 2011/12 including – Charities, Clerks pay and expenses combined.

xviii) **Birlingham Roads**. Chairman's email 11 January to Roy Fullee. Quotes, “I am sending you an email to request an update on our roads in the village as it has all gone very quiet from your end. You did say when we went around the village that you would keep us informed as to what you were going to put in place. that was three years ago and three finance budgets later!!!!!!!!!!!! I think it is now time to come off the fence and tell us the worse. We have been more than patient and now I see yet more yellow markings on the Eckington road. We have seen virtually every road in our locality or a five mile radius resurfaced, chipped, patched or whatever but nothing in Birlingham. WHEN IS OUR VILLAGE GOING TO HAVE ANY WORK DONE ON OUR ROADS TO BRING THEM UP TO A REALISTIC STANDARD FOR 2012 AND NOT 1912?

We still have the same amount of traffic yet everybody wants to brush the problem under the carpet. We as a council get constant questions of what is happening about the roads and always we have no answers, it certainly does not make the council credible and as Chairman this is not acceptable.

We have a council meeting on the 18 January 2012 and would be very grateful for a reply before that date. Naturally, you would be more than welcome to come and speak to us in person. I look forward to your speedy reply”.

Clerk to Roy Fullee. “Just as an appendum. At our last Council meeting Adrian Hardman said we should report some of the roads in the village as "unsafe". Can I therefore ask that this request be reported as such? The Council awaits a response”

Roy Fullee to Chairman 17 January. Quote, “All roads are subjected to routine inspections (with the frequency dependant on road classification) while any dangerous or intervention-level defects identified will be recorded with a works order subsequently raised, leading to appropriate repairs through our reactive maintenance programme (e.g. 'pothole filling'). Following our meeting in August 2010, the roads in Birlingham were inspected, with such defects marked up for repair.

If, following inspections and other thorough surveys, a road is found to require more extensive attention it will be submitted as an advisory location for resurfacing/patching through our planned maintenance programme. Locations will then be assessed and prioritised to determine which carriageways throughout the County will be treated during each financial year based on technical requirements, while this 'filtering' process is essential due to the finite resources available for highway services in general, not just for highway maintenance. I fully appreciate that this process will invariably lead to disappointment for many locations throughout the County which will otherwise continue to benefit from our reactive maintenance programme as and when required.

However, I am certainly not discounting the concerns of Birlingham Parish Council while the County Council are aware that there are some sections of some roads in Birlingham which require works which are more extensive than those provided through our reactive maintenance programme. Nonetheless, Birlingham will not be unique in this situation while there are many other similar classes of roads throughout Worcestershire that warrant resurfacing/patching. The Parish Council's concerns are being investigated with due diligence by highway officers – once I have further, and more concrete, information to hand I will be in touch with either yourself or June. I have a personal appointment tomorrow straight after work and I am unsure what time I will be finished, so regrettably I will be unavailable to attend the Parish Council meeting, which I would have been more than happy to do upon approval from County Councillor Hardman”.

Further email, quotes “Further to my e-mail, I would like to inform you that our highways maintenance team will be including some roads in Birlingham in next financial year's planned maintenance schedule (2012/13), subject to resourcing and programming. As yet the specific locations, extent of works and scheduling are still to be decided, but in terms of the type of work involved, this will be a combination of structural patching, surface dressing and resurfacing”.

xix) **Lengthsman** – Returned timesheet for 2011. May = 4hrs, June = 1 hour, November = 6hrs and December = 2hrs. So claim of £130 has been submitted to WCC. Clerk has spoken to Carl who was working at the time on a gully. Concerned that if the work isn't done Council will lose the scheme where the allowance of £1724 is available for 2011/12. He said the work hasn't been there due to the dry weather. Why had he asked about an assistant then? Only if needed but that hasn't been the case. Clerk confirmed to Lengthsman that the Council were happy with him taking on extra help if it was needed. Councillors asked that if they know of work needing doing, please say. It was confirmed that the gullies on New Barn Road had been cleared.

xx) Circulated again. Worcestershire County Council **Budget Consultation Briefing** on 18 January. Quotes “whilst attendance at the meeting is encouraged, the Council is also keen to ensure that there additional opportunities for comments to be received on the proposed budget plans. An online survey has been created which seeks views”.

xxi) **Compost bins** special offer. Flyer put on noticeboard.

xxii) **Register of Interests Forms** Wychavon District Council. John Hill and Charlotte Butler need to complete the forms and return to the Monitoring Officer, Ian Marshall. John Hill reported that he had completed and sent his declaration of Interest . Charlotte Butler was still to action.

xxiii) Wychavon District Council – **Standards Committee** on Wednesday 18 January. Circulated to all Councillors.

xxiv) **Standing Orders** – amended and circulated to all Councillors.

xxv) **Contacts list** – amended and circulated to Councillors and Wardens.

xxvi) **Berwick Bridge**. 17 January Clerks conversation with Wimpy Derbyshire. Clerk had emailed her regarding the railings on the Berwick Brook Bridge and responsibility. Wimpy tells me she had replied (spammed?). Clerk informed her that would try to find the email / extract from highways saying they only take responsibility/ownership up to the bridge and not the bridge itself. Wimpy did not know this and had said some years ago the Highways said they owned it. She has said that she feels the safety is a concern, particularly as the one side now has no metal on it at all. She will contact someone like Swimbourne Bros and get something put there. It was contractors (Environment Agency or Worcestershire Wildlife?) who repaired the base of the bridge as they damaged it. This has been an argument with Highways since 2004.

xxvii) **War memorial** - the possibility of a trust was mentioned as the war memorial is not in the Parish Council’s ownership? Check insurance.

7) Planning

a) Report on current outstanding planning applications

i) **W/11/02632/PP** – extension to front of dwelling and porch
Calderstones, Whitehall Lane, Birlingham WR10 3AB
Decision due: 2 February

Parish Council: No objections

ii) **W/11/02767/HET** – Extension of time application (following grant of planning permission ref no W/08/03079/PP) for the extension to Peacock Cottage
Peacock Barn, Lower End, Birlingham WR10 3AD

Decision due: 6 February

Parish Council: No objections

b) Applications approved/refused

i) **W/11/02161/PP** – Detached garage/garden store and single storey extension to house

Leyfield, Church Street, Birlingham WR10 3AQ

APPROVED 8 DECEMBER

Parish Council comments: The Parish Council makes no objection but the garage appears very large for the site. If WDC's recommendation is for approval we would ask that the garage is not used for domestic accommodation

Note from Planning Officer when questioned on condition: Delegated decision report was: ‘The Parish Council have not objected to the application but have commented that they consider the proposed garage/garden store is fairly large and it should only be used by the occupants of Leyfield, ancillary to the use of the dwelling.

The application does not seek to develop the garage/garden store as a separate residential unit and it is not considered necessary to condition the use of the garage/garden store as it clearly could not be used as a separate dwelling.’

“Of course, re-reading it the Parish Council could have meant that they didn’t want it to be used as an annexe rather than a separate dwelling. To be honest though, I don’t think it really matters as I wouldn’t have considered it reasonable to apply a condition whereby it had to remain as a garage/shed. If they want to use it as an annexe they can. Incidentally, from memory they had a few bits of timber and machinery in the garden so I expect they are going to mainly use it for storage etc. It’s an acceptable design and won’t impact on the amenity of any neighbours”.

ii) **W/11/02378/AA** – New signage board 2 metres wide by 1 metre tall and externally illuminated from 7am until 8pm daily

Willow Rise, Eckington Road, Birlingham WR10 3DA

WITHDRAWN 10 JANUARY

Parish Council comments: The Parish Council has no objections to the erection of a sign in the proposed position or to its design and dimensions.

The Council does however strongly object to the proposal to illuminate the sign from 7.00 to 8.00 p.m. The Council believe that the introduction of illuminations to signs in a rural context is to be resisted as not being consistent with the rural character of the surroundings. We also consider that there is a need to reduce not increase the effect of light pollution in the countryside.

There are a large number of signs posted throughout the village, though we doubt whether all have received planning permission, and there would be considerable opposition if permission for one illuminated sign set a precedent for others to follow.

8) Financial Matters

a) Bank balance - £2412.02 as at 13 December 2011

b) Receipts:

£130.00 – Worcestershire County Council BACS - Lengthsman

Payments:

£460.00 – Clerks pay (July, August, September)

£115.00 – HM Revenue & Customs (October, November, December)

£460.00 – Clerks pay (October, November, December)

£40.00 – Poppy wreaths for Eckington and Birlingham memorials

c) The Accounts for 2011/12 were accepted.

d) Future payments:

- £ 23.20 Annual Tree Forum 14 September 2011 (mileage to Wyre Forest Activity Centre - attendance free so claim for travel only) agreed in November budget.

- Allowance for grass cutting of village green (agreed in November budget) . Clerk still to contact Mr Maxwell. Ongoing action.
- Clerks pay and PAYE - £575 quarterly January to March (5 April end of financial year)
- Footpath Expenses from Budget

9) Queens Diamond Jubilee

The Parish Council want to know what interest there is in holding celebrations for the Queens Diamond Jubilee. Marion Kirkland had contacted the Clerk asking if there would be interest in the Cardiff Arms Male Voice Choir on the Saturday evening. Later however, the Choir decided they would want to be with their families. They are now tentively booked for 1 September after the Flower Show. The BVH bookings secretary had been contacted to see which evenings were free for public meetings. Mondays were favourable. It was agreed to hold a public meeting on Monday 30 January at 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Councillor Morris agreed to Chair. Councillor Aston although absent agreed to assist. Councillor Butler was already helping. All other Councillors' were willing to help. This would not be a Parish Council committee but the members would get the event started. Could the Housing Bonus be used for the village? It was therefore agreed to commence with the initial stages to see what residents wanted and members resolved to pay for the Village Hall on 30 January. An advert would be placed on the noticeboard and in The Swan.

10) Website/email group

The Chairman and Councillors Morris and Hill had met briefly. The idea was to make minutes available to members of the public, to supply more general information than we can do on the noticeboard. Councillors Morris and Hill gave a presentation on a potential design for a website. It was a simple design which could be changed but it gave an idea of what could be done without any difficulty with maintenance. The cost of the website was £26.98 per annum. This could be re-couped from advertising. There would be a home page with suggestions such as planning, organisations, events gallery, maps, business/companies. The style and layout was open to suggestions but to keep simple. Councillor Morris was happy to get up and running and maintain. The domain was to be set up and looked at before it went public. Chairman thanked Councillors Morris and Hill for their time. It was agreed to go ahead and update at the next meeting.

In March 2011 it was agreed to go ahead with the idea of setting up an email group as a means of quickly advising residents of important issues such as meeting decisions, planning applications, road closures, possible forthcoming events or issues. Councillor Morris was setting up an email contact group for any parishioners interesting in keeping in touch through the Parish Council. This would be advertised further. The Clerk would assist Councillor Morris. Update at the next meeting.

11) Parish Plan

There are two officers in the Policy Department at Wychavon District Council who assist with Parish Plans, unfortunately one is now on maternity leave. Clerk was still to acknowledge the responses from residents following the letter September 2011. There had been a good response. It was felt a committee would be needed to drive the Plan forward but Councillor Comins does not feel it is appropriate for him personally. Is someone prepared to come forward? It is a commitment but an introduction is

required. The Plan holds more weight now in terms of planning with the Localism Bill. Clerk to contact Wychavon.

- 12) Councillors' reports and items for future agenda
Queens Diamond Jubilee.
Website.
Email group.
Clerk's salary and expenses.

- 13) Closure – with nothing further to discuss the meeting closed at 8.45. **The next Parish Council Meeting is on Wednesday 21 March 2012**

Signed:Councillor Anthony J Hall, Chairman

Date:

Democratic Opening – Chris Reynard reported from PACT. It was relatively quiet apart from the metal thefts. There had been one on the railway track at Eckington and some copper water pipes. The new number for non-urgent calls for the police is 101. The litter on New Barn Road and near Woodfield was being monitored by the Police. If anyone sees anything they were asked to report. The Chairman thanked Chris for carrying on being a representative for the Parish Council.

Severn Trent should take responsibility for the roads, particularly in the Lower End. The roads are falling apart.

The new trees have been caught by the hedge cutter. The farmers are taking the tops out of the trees even though they are staked, particularly on Broadway Road. Request that the Parish Council write to Revills.

The manhole near The Moors is still not repaired.